The Influence of Social Network Sites on Consumer Psychology

---A Study on Bilibili Users

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Abstract: This paper aims to explore the influence of social network sites (SNSs) on consumer psychology, focusing on Bilibili users. Nowadays, technology giant companies continuously developed SNSs, whether they are applications or social media websites. They have made a huge difference in people's normal lives, especially those teenage users. However, these constant changes are having a significant effect on people's consumption behavior---how they think when it comes to purchasing or how they would react when facing a brand-new product. These effects are what the paper mainly focuses on to research. To achieve this goal, a survey was conducted on a sample of 100 users of Bilibili. The survey results were analyzed to determine the influence of SNSs on consumer psychology. The results showed that Bilibili users were affected by SNSs in terms of their social media consumption behavior, attitude toward consumption, and consumption motivation. It was also found that the influence varied with different types of users and different types of consumption activities. The findings of this study provide useful insights into the relationship between SNSs and consumer psychology. Besides, it also suggests that SNS can be used as an effective tool for marketers to influence consumer behavior and attitudes to promote goods.

Keywords: social network site, Bilibili, consumer psychology, consumer behavior

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of information and communication technologies, social media platforms have become increasingly popular and influential. Social network sites (SNSs) are online platforms that enable users to create and share content, connect with other users, and build social relationships [1]. For example, Twitter allows users to share their moments of life, which establishes a platform for everyone to share their lifestyle as well as their point of view. While others can comment or retweet the content and add a new opinion, thus creating an interaction demand in return. Platforms like Twitter have become an integral part of modern life, and have had a profound impact on the way people interact and behave.

However, the Chinese online platform Bilibili has a slight difference compared to traditional SNSs, in that its primary content is made of videos, animations, and live streams. And unlike

Twitter, the user group among Bilibili are much younger, the Z generation is the major group. Previous studies have shown that traditional SNSs can influence consumer behavior and attitudes, as well as their purchase decisions, yet the influence of SNSs on consumer psychology has not been fully explored. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of SNSs on consumer psychology, focusing on Bilibili users, who are regarded as Chinese new-type SNS users. The article also intended to complement the process of how SNS influence consumer psychology, deeply analyzing the link between the content of the video on Bilibili and the purchasing tendency.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Impact of Snss

The influence of SNSs on consumer behavior has been widely studied in the marketing and consumer behavior literature. Previous studies have demonstrated that SNSs can be used to influence consumer behavior and attitudes [2]. Furthermore, other studies had attempted to explain that SNSs can be used to increase brand awareness, improve product sales, and increase customer loyalty [3].

In addition, SNSs have been found to have an impact on the way consumers think and behave since they provide a large amount of information. For example, recent evidence suggests that SNSs can influence consumer decision-making processes, such as the formation of attitudes and perceptions [4]. Furthermore, studies have shown that SNSs can improve users' adaption to new products and services [5].

2.2. Technology Acceptance Model and SNSs

Throughout the years, consumer behavior theories have been proposed and developed to explain the psychological processes of consumer decision-making. An important theory is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM proposes that consumers' intentions and behaviors to use technology are largely determined by their perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the technology. It suggests that the more useful and user-friendly technology is, the more likely people are to use it [6].

TAM has been applied in the context of SNSs to explain the adoption and usage of SNSs. For example, researchers found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were both significant predictors of Bilibili usage among Taiwanese college students [7]. Furthermore, TAM also suggests that users' attitudes towards technology can be affected by other factors such as perceived enjoyment, perceived trust, and perceived innovation, which represented that these factors can influence user engagement and satisfaction with an SNS.

SNSs have become an important tool for businesses to interact with their customers, and build relationships with them. As such, it is important to understand how SNSs influence consumer psychology.

One key factor is the role of SNSs in creating a sense of belonging and community. SNSs provide a platform for people to communicate and share their ideas, and this can lead to the formation of strong relationships between users. For example, researchers found that the sense of community in Bilibili was an important predictor of user engagement. This sense of community is an important factor that can influence consumer psychology, as it can create a sense of loyalty and attachment to a brand [8].

In addition, SNSs can also affect consumer behavior through the way they present information. Social media platforms like Bilibili offer users a wealth of information, which can influence their decision-making process. For instance, researchers found that exposure to user-generated content on Bilibili had a significant impact on users' purchase intentions [9]. The result indicated that the way

SNSs present information demand is well designed to have a deeper effect on consumers, big data technology can be a useful tool.

2.3. eWOM and SNSs

Furthermore, SNSs can also be used as a platform for word-of-mouth communication. Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is an important factor in influencing consumer behavior, and SNSs can be a powerful way to spread WOM. For example, researchers found that eWOM had a significant impact on purchase intentions [10]. This suggests that SNSs can be used to effectively spread WOM and influence consumer behavior.

The research on SNSs had proved that there is a certain connection between consumer psychology and also proved the business model of Bilibili affects users at the same time. However, Bilibili had made huge and rapid innovations nowadays. It not only changed its slogan but also publish some new developing policies. So analyzing how the new Bilibili affects consumer behavior can be a point to be contributed in this paper.

3. Methodology

3.1. Basic Background of Bilibili

In this study, a survey was conducted to investigate the influence of SNSs on consumer psychology, focusing on Bilibili users. Bilibili is a popular SNS in China, It is the most active online video and communication website in China. It has 172 million monthly active users, 1.1 billion daily video view counts, and 4.9 billion monthly user interactions. Based on animation, games, and live streams, it provides a platform for users to share bullet screen videos. Similar to niconico in Japan, but in terms of user activity, Bilibili has surpassed niconico to become the world's largest bullet screen video website.

In the first place, it mainly focuses on bringing in new animations and attracting animation lovers. But with its rapid development, Bilibili started to step into other fields, such as video games, live streams, education, etc., and also initiated offline activities. The Gaming sector has already become the most viewed and published video sector, even surpassing the lifestyle and movie sector. It is the multiple contents and comprehensive operation that ensure Bilibili's success in China and its well-known reputation among teenagers.

The reason that it was selected as the research platform is that it is widely used by Chinese youth and the form of Bilibili has gradually become a cultural community, which turned out to be a new form of SNS.

3.2. Survey on Bilibili Users

A sample of 100 Bilibili users was recruited for the survey. The questionnaire was published online, with questions as followed: The age of respondents, the frequency of using Bilibili(including website and app), the amount of time of using Bilibili every day, the most viewed area on Bilibili, the willingness of watching video recommending certain commodities, the degree of Bilibili video or comments that affected the purchase enthusiasm, the degree of Bilibili video or comments that affected the purchase decision and the certain type of commodity viewed most on Bilibili.

3.3. Questionnaire Design

The sample consisted of both male and female users, aged 16-35. The survey aimed to make use of questions related to the respondents' engagement and user loyalty on Bilibili as well as how content on Bilibili affects their consumption behavior, attitude towards consumption, and consumption

motivation.

The main analysis methodology used in the paper was a questionnaire, some of the questions were required to use an approximate number to answer, such as the frequency of using Bilibili and the amount of time of using Bilibili every day. Other questions like the degree of Bilibili video or comments that affected the purchase enthusiasm, the degree of Bilibili video or comments that affected the purchase decision, which is also the most essential part of the questionnaire, there are degrees 1-5 for respondents to chose, 1 is for really low intention and 5 is for really high intention. As the questions like the most viewed area on Bilibili and the certain type of commodity viewed most on Bilibili are intended to seek a correlation of preference on SNS between consumption psychology.

In addition to the survey, a content analysis was conducted to analyze the content posted on Bilibili, focusing on the types of video evaluating commodity, analyzing the methods of evaluation, the popularity of uploaders, and the amount of review of video and how they were related to consumer psychology.

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of Questionnaire

The survey results showed that Bilibili users were significantly influenced by SNSs in terms of their social media consumption behavior, attitude toward consumption, and consumption motivation. The range of age of users was 16-35, and 75% of respondents were around 20, which emphasized the users group of Bilibili is mainly among Chinese teenagers. As for the result of how frequently people use Bilibili, 43% of respondents chose almost every day and 49% of respondents chose nearly 3-4 times per week, which illustrated that user engagement and loyalty are pretty high. As for the result of the amount of time used Bilibili every day, in total 32% of people chose 2-4 hours per day and 48% of people chose 1 hour per day. And for the willingness of watching videos recommending certain commodities, 12% of people chose high willingness, 20% of people chose a little high, and 29% of people chose medium, which indicated 49% of people in total have a positive attitude toward commodity-based video. As for the most viewed area, it turns out video game area and animation area are the top 2 areas, which are 51% and 38% people individually. And for the degree of Bilibili videos or comments that affected the purchase enthusiasm, 26% of people chose high enthusiasm and 42% of people chose a little high, which indicated in total 66% of people's consumption intention were highly affected by videos on Bilibili. As for the degree of Bilibili video or comments that affected the purchase decision, similar to the previous question, 24% of people were highly influenced by Bilibili, 48% of people chose a little high, which showed in total 72% of people's consumption decision were once affected by Bilibili. The last question is about the certain type of commodity viewed most on Bilibili, digital devices (31%), food(27%) and animation models(23%) were the top 3.

4.2. The Theory Behind Bilibili User Consumption

The results showed that Bilibili users consume a variety of content on the platform, including videos, images, and text. The content that users consume on Bilibili is highly related to their interests and motivations. Users tend to view the video related to their interest in purchasing, They normally spotted goods online(no matter on Bilibili or other sources) and then search the keywords of goods on Bilibili, viewing related videos, including appraisal and operating. The uploaders will usually explain the characteristics, traits, and drawbacks of certain goods, along with their using experience. After a comprehensive acknowledgment of certain goods, users will then decide whether they intend to purchase them or not. That is the common theory of how Bilibili affects

users' consumption decisions. Besides, there is also an evident relation between the popularity of uploaders between the persuasion of its video to viewers, the higher the acceptance and reputation of the authors, the more convincing they have.

The results also showed that the influence of SNSs on consumer psychology is varied with different types of users and different types of consumption activities. Younger users are more likely to be influenced by the content on Bilibili in terms of more impulse purchases, while older users are more rational when it comes to online shopping.

In addition, the content analysis also revealed that the content posted on Bilibili is often related to consumer psychology. For example, users often post content that reflects their own interests, such as a game uploader often reviews new mouse or keyboard products.

5. Discussion

5.1. From a Marketer's Perspective

The results of this study demonstrate that SNSs can have a significant influence on consumer psychology. And also suggest that SNSs can be used to influence consumer behavior and attitudes, as well as their purchase decisions. Furthermore, the outcome also indicates that the influence of SNSs on consumer psychology is varied with different types of users and different types of consumption activities.

The results of this study have important implications for marketers and businesses. The results suggest that marketers can use SNSs to influence consumer behavior and attitudes. In this scenario, companies can get contact with famous uploaders, well cooperated with them to reach an invisible advertisement. And also increases brand awareness, improves product sales, and increases customer loyalty. Furthermore, the results suggest that SNSs can be used to influence consumer motivation, such as the desire for social recognition. The Big data technique plays a crucial part in providing users with the right recommendation thus fostering their consumer identity. For example, a game lover who often viewed Bilibili and was willing to improve his game equipment checked out several game mouse videos. The big data of Bilibili continuously pushed new game mouse reviews to him in terms of his behavior. Thus the user's purchase tendency will be affected and he will recognize himself as a game fanatic and game mouse lover more.

5.2. Limitation

The research also has its limitation, such as the number of respondents being inadequate and also lack of further study on Bilibili's community. If deeper research is needed, the respondents should be broadened, both amount and age group. Studies targeting marketers as well as the operators in Bilibili are also needed, which can add advanced insight from marketers' perspectives.

6. Conclusion

This research investigated the impact of Social Network Sites (SNSs) on the psychology of Bilibili users. Results of the study revealed that SNSs had a considerable effect on the social media consumption behavior, attitude towards consumption, and consumption motivation of Bilibili users, with variations amongst different types of users and different types of consumption activities. The findings of this study provide useful insights into the relationship between SNSs and consumer psychology. It also suggests that SNS can be used as an effective tool to influence consumer behavior and attitudes. Last but not least, if further study is required, the range of survey have to be broadened, along with more insight into the marketer's perspective. The main contribution of this article fills the vacancy in the consumer psychology research field and is deemed to be a crucial

segment demonstrating how video content on SNS affects consumer's purchase behavior.

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